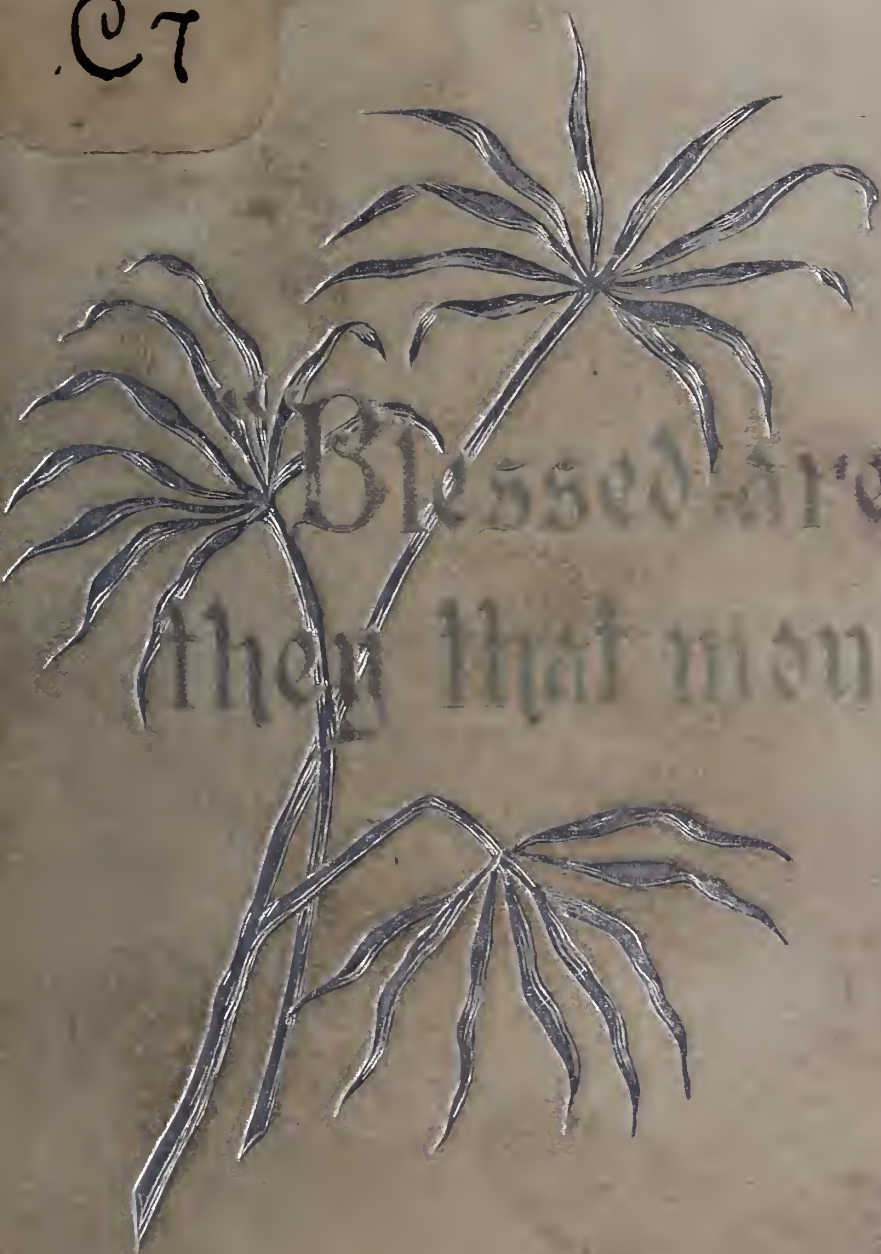


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Blessed are
they that mourn"

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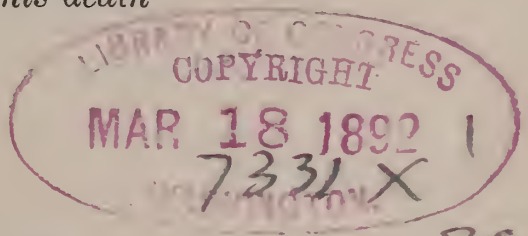
Bible, English, Selections, 1892

"Blessed are they that Mourn"

THOUGHTS FROM THE HOLY BIBLE
ON THE
STATE OF THE BLESSED DEAD

WITH BRIEF NOTES BY
EDITH R. CROSBY

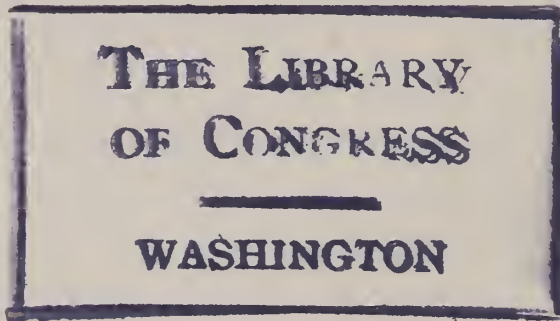
*To which is added a short address on the Future
Life, delivered by the Rev. Howard Crosby
shortly before his death*



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TROW DIRECTORY
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IN MEMORY OF MY DEAR FATHER

HOWARD CROSBY

I HAVE COLLECTED THESE WORDS OF COMFORT FROM
THE BOOK WHICH WAS THE SOURCE OF HIS
NOBLE AND UNFALTERING FAITH

E. R. C.

PREFACE.

WHEN we, Christians, are walking in the sunshine of prosperity we are apt to forget that we need any other light. It is so easy then to see the way with our own eyes, and to understand the reason why with our own intellects. But when the darkness of sorrow envelops us, blinding our eyes with tears, and clouding our minds with doubts, then we long to be treated as little children, to be led by the hand by someone who sees better than we see, and to be told what to believe by some one who knows better than we know. We want facts to rest upon, promises to cling to. We fear when we enter into the cloud, and we want to hear the voice coming out of the cloud saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." In such hours, when all other light has utterly failed us, if we cannot make God's Word a lamp unto our feet we must walk in horrible darkness.

But God has promised that His presence, which may have been but a scarcely noticed cloud in the daytime, shall be to us a pillar of fire by night, to

search us out a place to pitch our tents in. And our Lord has said: "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

In straining our limited human capacities to solve the great mystery of death, and to follow those we love beyond the veil, God has not promised to help us to clear vision, we must walk by faith and not by sight—but He *has* promised to keep our feet from falling, and to comfort those who mourn, "as one whom his mother comforteth." When our saints are received up into Heaven "out of our sight," it is impossible for God to reveal to us the full glory which they enjoy, our finite minds could not grasp it; we must be content with hints and suggestions, instead of details.

On one point the Bible is emphatically explicit, reiterating it, as we shall see, under every variety of form; *they are with Christ, in His glory.*

Besides this, which, however, in its fulness includes all happiness, we can only catch glimpses, faint, often, but very precious to the sad heart in its longing. And I have collected and combined in the following pages those words of Holy Scripture which have most helped me "in time of need," that they may also comfort other mourners.

There are a few suggestions, too detached to put into the body of the text, which I would call attention to here.

David says of his dead baby : “I shall go to him,” giving us hope of the continuation of home affections. Our Lord says to Martha : “ *Thy brother* shall rise again,” using the name of earthly relationship, even in connection with the resurrection. St. Paul speaks of “the whole family in Heaven and earth,” giving us a close sense of companionship and union with those in Heaven ; and of the “cloud of witnesses” who watch our race, among whom it is a reasonable hope to imagine those who have loved us here, and who have now won their prize.

I would also like to mention the examples of two mourners which have seemed to me very helpful.

In St. Matthew xiv. 13 and 14 we are told what Jesus did when He was told of the death of John the Baptist, a man undoubtedly dear to him. First, He went into a desert place apart, which, with Him, always meant to pray. Then He went forth among the multitude, with His heart full of compassion for them, and began to heal them. Should we not do the same ? First, pray, that is, take our thoughts out of ourselves by raising them to God ; then do good—that is, keep our grief from becoming selfish by filling our hearts with love and helpfulness for others.

In St. John xi. we have another suggestion.

When the Jews thought that Mary had gone to weep at her brother's grave, she had really gone to meet Jesus, and it was *with Him* that she went to the grave. Let us never go to the graves of our loved ones without taking Jesus with us, for He alone can make us realize that the grave has not gotten the victory.

NOTE.

I HAVE not given the references for the following collection of verses, first, because it would break any attempt at continuity ; secondly, because it may give the verses a little freshness to see them quite apart from any hint of their usual context ; and thirdly, because it may prove a slight source of interest at a time when it is hard to find any, if those who are reading should be incited to take up their Bible and Concordance and look up the texts for themselves.

I have transposed and changed the order of some of the verses, in order to emphasize some point more strongly, but I have been careful never to do so if the transposition could in any way alter or falsify their original meaning.

I have also omitted all mention of the condemnatory side of the resurrection, not because it is not equally important, but because it does not come within the purpose of this book, which is to comfort those mourners whose dead have died in the Lord.

The Revised Version has been used only where it makes the passage much more clear.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOSS AND SUFFERING.

BLESSED are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

God is love. He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man. For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as

with sons ; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby ; for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of.

Beloved, now are we the Sons of God. And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered ; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil ; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you : but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings ; that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. For I reckon that

the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

“I will come again, and *receive you* unto myself.”

His *body* was not gathered to his people. Reunion of souls promised?

Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

Thou (Moses) also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from that which is evil. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his! Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace. The righteous is an everlasting foundation.

“Him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall no more go out.”

The righteous hath hope in his death. He shall enter into peace. The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death. The way of life is above to the wise. The wise shall inherit glory. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts among men, yea, among the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell with them. God is unto us a God of deliverances; and unto Jehovah the Lord belong the issues from death. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon

“In hope of eternal life.”

“Is passed from death unto life.”

“Shall not see death.”

“The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them.”

“I will give him the morning-star.”

“I have the keys of hell and of death.”

“Receive you unto myself.”

The “rest” and “sleep” spoken of so often in connection with death in the Bible is of the flesh, the body.

“The pure in heart shall see God.”

Again personal reception provided.

earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever. My heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures forevermore. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness. I will behold Thy face in righteousness. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand up at the last upon the earth: and after my skin hath been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. Thy dead men shall live, together with

my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty: they shall behold a far-stretching land. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the Lord will be with us in majesty.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. The redeemed shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Saints of the Most High

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.”

Satisfaction of what are now æsthetic ideals in animate and inanimate nature.

“A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Bodily and spiritual health.

“Ruler over many things.”

“And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones.”

shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom forever, even for ever and ever. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues! O grave, I will be thy destruction!

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.

THE REDEEMER'S PROMISE.

Immediate entrance to Paradise with Jesus.

To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

HIS WELCOME.

Sovereignty.

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Continued and increasing activity combined with power.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make

thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

WHAT JESUS SAYS ABOUT DEATH AND THE
RESURRECTION.

I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God.

Introduction.
“Not as a stranger.”

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more:

Sovereignty
again.

Equality with angels.

The transition from the mortal to the immortal life may take place before physical death, by faith. So that when death comes it can have no power over the "Ego," which *is* passed from death unto life.

Full acquittal.

for they are equal unto the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but *is* passed from death unto life. If a man keep my sayings he shall never see death. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live. The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which

He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Fruitfulness.

With Jesus.

Absolute safety.

More abundant life.

Let not your heart be troubled:

A promise of a *home*, especially prepared by Christ. He comes to receive us as we cross its threshold. See Exodus xxiii. 20.

Again *with Jesus*.

Continued, not interrupted, Life.

We go, with Jesus, to the Father.

Seeing and sharing His glory.

A promise of perfection.

ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die. Because I live, ye shall live also.

If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold my glory. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. We know that all things work together for good to them that love God. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end

Our labour not
in vain. Rest and
fruition.

“I go to pre-
pare.”

“The Kingdom
prepared.”

No separation
from God in
death.

Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.

“Hope of eternal life.”

“The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.”

A promise of reunion.

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together with them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall

we ever be with the Lord. For our conversation is in Heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all

Our resurrection bodies shall be like Christ's.

“A perfect man—the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

“I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.”

“See the King in His beauty.”

be made alive. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. For we know that if our earthly house of this tab-

Each shall receive an individual body, and one which expresses *him, his* “*own body.*”

ernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from Heaven: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. But though our outward man perish, our inward man is renewed day by day. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always of good courage, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be

“Many mansions.”

Death is not a *taking off*, but a *putting on*.

“Until Christ be formed in you.”

“Looking unto Jesus.”

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

While the mortal is diminishing the immortal is increasing “day by day,”—when it becomes perfect, the scaffolding can be taken away.

To die is to be at
once with Christ;
and to be with
Him is to be at
home.

at home with the Lord. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain; for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that

they were strangers and pilgrims on earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city. For here we have no abiding city, but we seek one to come.

A Heavenly
Country.

A city prepared.

Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant.

The citizens and
officers of that
city.

Perfection.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat

Born into a hope
of *life*.

us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Righteousness.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.

Continuance.

He that doeth the will of God abideth forever. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God. Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail ; whether there be tongues, they shall cease ;

Love the key to
immortality.

whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass, darkly ; but then face to face : now I know in part ; but then shall I know even as I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; but the greatest of these is love.

Love never faileth.

A promise of recognition and understanding.

A promise of unending love for each other. The love in 1 Cor. xiii. is not love to God, but to our brethren.

THE VISION OF THE FUTURE IN THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

I am He that liveth, and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Immortal power.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. He that overcometh

Satisfaction of the human instinct of immortality.

Safety. shall not be hurt of the second death.

Satisfaction of spiritual hunger. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Individuality.

Power. He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers : as I also have received of my Father : and I will give him the morning-star.

Jesus says : “*I am the bright and morning-star.*”

Covering and beauty.

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment ; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels.

Acknowledgment.

Stability and permanence.

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall no more go out : and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God,

which is the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God : and I will write upon him my new name.

Heavenly citizenship.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

Heirs of God.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne.

Sovereignty.

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes ? and whence came they ? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest.

A great multitude.

And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. And they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And every

The harmony
and joy of music,

On the earth.

creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour

Music.

to Him : for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints. And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it ; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.

A new earth. Not a vague place of departed spirits, but something which resembles our present earth as our new glorious bodies will resemble our present ones.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven,

prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away.

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it : and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day : for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

The gates shall
not be shut.

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

On either side. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

No more curse.

Service for God.

Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

VICTORY OVER DEATH.

1 COR. XV. 54, 57.

BY HOWARD CROSBY, D.D.

HUMAN power can change similar things to similar things; divine power can change opposite things to opposite things. Divine power can take a sinner steeped in sin, without a single mitigation of his sin, and make him a saint, make him holy as God is holy. And so, too, where to human eyes is the darkest cloud, there divine grace shines the brightest. The passage for the evening is an illustration of this. It is a pæan of victory which all may sing with emphasis, if they belong to Christ, if they are in Him. It has a likeness to what occurred at the grave of Lazarus. When the body of Lazarus lay in the tomb, Jesus said to his sisters two things. A cursory reading does not show this double meaning, but if we carefully examine the statement we shall find that Jesus speaks of the body, and he speaks of the man, the soul, life, being. “I am the resurrection (that is, of the body) and the life (that is, of the soul, the man, the being). He that believeth in Me, though he were dead (the body’s death), yet shall he live (the body’s resurrec-

tion): and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die” (referring to the man, the soul, the life, the being). The two thoughts are clearly set forth. Then came the resurrection of Lazarus as a type or sacrament of the truth. It was the seal put to what the Lord said for His people of all time. The body shall rise again, the soul shall never die.

This same double statement is found in the passage before us. “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption (the body and its resurrection), and this mortal (the body) shall have put on immortality, then shall be accomplished or completed the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory,” as that grand finality when the body raised shall be joined to the soul that never died. As long as the body is not raised, there is a semblance of death’s victory over the dust; when the body is raised, there is nothing left of death, not even a show.

Nor is this all. The apostle goes on quoting from the Old Testament. “O death, where is thy sting? O hades (not “grave.” He had finished speaking of the grave in the verse before). “O death, where is thy sting? O hades (the lower world, the unseen world), where is thy victory?” Hades has no victory over the soul, the man, the being. Why? “The sting of death (which is the gate into the unseen world) is sin.” That which makes men afraid of death,

that which makes death horrid, is sin, and sin brings with it the fearful looking for of judgment, the pangs of conscience, the forebodings of approaching retribution, for “the strength of sin is the law.” But we in Christ have fulfilled the law. The righteousness demanded by the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The law has nothing against us, and so sin has no strength. God has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we get the righteousness, the precious gift from the God of our salvation; through Him the obedience of the law is fulfilled in us. And so for us death is absolutely banished, is made naught, is made good for nothing, as the Greek reads in another Scripture, which we have translated, “abolished death.” For us Christ *has* made death as if it had never existed. For unbelievers death is dreadful, but for us there is not the slightest thing in death to dread, not the slightest thing to trouble us, or to cause us a single fear.

“But many Christians fear death.” Well, they ought not to fear it. All who are in Christ ought to look upon what is called death (using the common phraseology and meaning the death of the body), we ought to look upon this with the greatest delight. What is death to you and to me! “I go to prepare a place for you (it is our Lord who speaks). And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again,

and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Now, is the coming of the Lord Jesus to take me unto Himself, to take me unto His own eternal home to dwell there with Him forever—is this a thing for me to fear? Is it not something for me to hail with delight? Ought I not to look forward to it as the greatest joy in existence? If I am found dreading death, I am showing myself a coward, and I am insulting my Lord. Death to me should be a thing longed for. The thought of death should be to me an ecstasy of joy.

“But the pain attending death makes me shrink from it.” I can say this in answer to such an objection. Every one of us, no doubt, has suffered from disease a bodily pain ten times more severe than we shall feel in dying.

I have been by a hundred death-beds, and in all death was easy. A disease of three or four days, from which one recovers, often causes far more pain than the departure of the soul from the body. The sting of death is gone for us. Our sins have been blotted out. No condemnation is written against us; the law has no punishment recorded against us. There is nothing in our way. Why should we not rejoice and give thanks when we see death approaching?

Note one thing stated here about the body. “This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.” In

the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, fifth chapter, we read this, “Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon.” In one sense my present body is not to be raised. If it were raised it would be a corruptible body, but I am to put on an incorruptible body. My identity is to be preserved in some way. I don’t know how, but God knows. I know this much. I know that there is not an atom in my body today that was there thirty years ago, and I know that my identity has not altered in the least during these thirty years. The power of God raises the body from the grave, not man’s invention, and in some way the identity is retained, though not a particle of the body is the same. It is the same body, and not the same. It is the body corruptible made incorruptible, made like unto the glorious body of our Lord. You know how the apostle represents this in figure. The seed is sown and springs up according to the kind sown, and yet in one sense the seed sown dies before the fruit can come forth. It is the same and not the same.

I think there is more than this. I think we are right in thinking that we shall never be without a body. As soon as this earthly tabernacle be dissolved we have (not “shall have after a long period” of waiting) a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. In some way we cannot now tell we shall have a body before our present body is raised from the

grave to be forever joined to the soul. We shall never be found naked, never be without a body. That we cannot understand the method does not trouble us. We know in whom we have believed; we know that He has almighty power and almighty wisdom; and we know that we are safe, body and soul, in Jesus Christ.

Ought we not to chant pæans of victory every day? If we would think less about our present condition and more about our future glory would we not be daily singing the triumph-song, “O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?” And then with our eyes fixed on our heavenly home and our hearts full of longing for its holiness and for the companionship of our dear Lord, would not our cry also be, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly?” All that is sweet, all that is lovely here on earth shall be ours there, and He shall be the centre of all. Without one regret, without one sorrow, with rapturous joy, we should run to meet, not death, but our dear Lord.

This is our privilege. We Christians have nothing to do with the world’s thoughts and feelings about death. We parted company with the world when we began to walk in the ways of righteousness. We breathe a different atmosphere from the world; we have learned some things the world cannot know. Why

should we go to the world's poets or the world's philosophers to get their ideas about death? Let us rather go to the Bible and hear our Lord telling us that for us death is changed to victory. The world talks about looking down, about the pall, the coffin, the grave, the blackness of death. We have nothing to do with such thoughts. To us, death means looking up, means brightness, joy, glory, Christ. Let us live up to our high privilege.

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